

744 Health, spoke on public health.⁵ She reported that efforts to protect the health of mothers and children made much headway, and that the mortality rate of expectant mothers and infants had dropped. Special attention to the health of women and children is urged in a Chinese Communist document, "The Common Program." Article 48 of this document declares that "Public health and medical work shall be expanded, and attention shall be paid to the protection of ^{THE} health of mothers, infants, and children."⁶ She reported that the training of midwives, the re-educating of "old-style" midwives, and the prevention of various childhood diseases have been stressed throughout China as well as in the Southwest.

To cite the municipality of Chungking, for example, by the middle of 1953 there were 26 health centers for women and children and 70 maternity stations with 684 midwives on duty. The practice of modern obstetrics showed a noticeable increase; modern methods were used in 10 per cent of the births in 1951, 30 per cent

5. Survey of China Mainland Press, American Consulate-General, Hong Kong, No. 922, pp. 41-42.

6. The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1949, p. 18.

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CHINESE LIFE ON THE TIBETAN FOOTHILLS

BOOK I—DOMESTIC

CHAPTER I.

BIRTHS, 生產 *shêng ch'an*, etc.

WHEN the birth is delayed it is put down to Lo Hou 羅候, 844
and the master of the house fires a gun over his shoulder, 782
towards the heavens to drive away the evil influences. These
influences are believed to come from the *t'ien-kou hsing* 天狗
星 or heavenly Dog-star. In some houses a picture of Chang
kung 張公 is hung up; he is depicted as carrying a sling and
stones; he is supposed to throw at this heavenly dog which
comes to devour the expected child. It is said that Chang
Hsien-chung 張獻忠 was an incarnation of this heavenly Dog-
star, which is also the devourer of the moon in lunar eclipses.

To take away or escort the blood demon 送血鬼 *sung
hsüeh kuei*, or demon of birth-pangs *ch'an-nan kuei* 產難鬼,
is the work of a sorcerer, and many incantations are practised
and charms used to assist the birth; the ceremony may take
place a few days before the birth is expected.

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The washing of the baby is deferred till the third day; this is called *shao san* 燒三 or *hsi san* 洗三. When the child is born it is simply wound in calico till the third day, when it is washed. This is said to be for fear the navel cord will not dry off, and will thus cause the death of the child.

If a man's heavy foot comes near the bedroom, it is feared the mother's milk may be driven away. A locked padlock is always kept on the outside of the bedroom door to prevent the milk leaving—*fang jên tai nai* 防人帶奶. At such times no member of the household will visit a house of mourning; and no person in mourning or pregnant is allowed to carry the child, for fear its spirit may be called away.

The father of the child goes to the home of his father-in-law with a present of meat, incense and paper money, pays his respects to all the elder generation, and finally worships at their ancestral shrine. This ceremony, called *pao hsi* 報喜, is only performed for the first-born.

Soon after the birth the father worships at his ancestral shrine, *pai tsu tsung* 拜祖宗, giving thanks that another generation has been born to carry on the ancestral rites.

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On the birth of the first grandson the grandfather takes round to particular friends some eggs which have been stained red, 紅蛋 *hung tan*, by being boiled in ochre water. This is not done at the birth of a grand-daughter.

Eggs are brought as a present to the mother, and at such times a woman gauges her happiness by the number of eggs she eats. In ordinary families a present of 20 or 30 eggs is quite common, but among the rich the number rises to 500 or even 1,000. A proverb says, "The male looks forward to going to the market, but the female to sitting in her room" 男子望趕場, 女人望坐房, that is, for a good time of feeding up. The mother is really expected to stay for a month in the house, *tso yueh* 坐月, or *tso ts'ao* 坐草, (because she likes to sit on something soft); and she is exempted from all out-door labour.

Besides the gifts of eggs and chickens for her eating, there are presents for the child,—shoes, hats, bangles and pinafores, varying in value according to the status of the family. In well-to-do circles presents of silver, ten to one hundred taels, are sent from the wife's home, to buy clothing and luxuries for the new grandson.

THE TIBETAN FOOTHILLS

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The goddess of Mercy, Kuan-Yin 觀音, who gives sons to her worshippers *sung tsü niang-niang* 送子娘娘, also called *san p'o niang-niang* 三婆娘娘 or *san heiao* 三霄, is believed to be in the house for the first three days after the confinement; at the end of this time the father makes her an offering of wine, incense and paper, behind the bedroom door, where the goddess is supposed to lodge. 844 782

At the end of ten days the the father's mother and other relatives are invited to a feast, and presents of rice, eggs and chickens are brought to the family. 846 852

At the end of a month a feast is given, called *t'ang ping* (or *mi* or *yüeh*) *chiu* 湯餅 (or 米 or 月) 酒; all those who have given presents are invited. After this the mother may go to the kitchen or the well; before this many will not speak to her, and Buddhist devotees are especially fearful about doing so.

After fulfilling forty days, *man sei-shih t'ien* 滿四十天, the mother may visit her friends and show off the baby. In complimenting the parents it is safe to say that the baby is ugly 醜, or to use any other derogatory terms, so that the demons will not want it.

Having fulfilled 120 days the mother may go to the temple and give thanks to the idols.

At the end of the first year *man chou sui*, the mother-in-law sends presents to the child. The old custom of this season was to lay before the child objects representing different occupations in life, and his training would afterwards be directed according to the object he grasped. This was called *chua nien* 抓年, grasping the year. 431 851

The above are some of the customs connected with ordinary cases. Women who are barren or son-less employ various methods to obtain such issue. 842 782

They beg a prayer-tally, 求籤 *ch'iu ch'ien* from a particular idol, take it home and keep it on the family altar. These tallies are notched pieces of bamboo, kept at the idol shrine for divination purposes.

They become vegetarians; this often means that they also distribute much rice to the poor. There are many kinds of vegetarian vows, such as *Kuan-yin chai* 觀音齋, (kept on the 9th, or by some on the 2nd, 6th and 9th, of each month); 842 785 261